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SHAKESPEARE'S DAUGHTERS

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# ACPL ITEM DISCARDED

ANNEX

793

Trader, George  
Shakespeare's daughters



OCT 30 '46

# SHAKESPEARE'S DAUGHTERS

A Fantasy in One Scene

BY  
GEORGE HENRY TRADER

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SHAKESPEARE'S DAUGHTERS.

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*Being a fantasy, in one scene (a glade in which appear as many of Shakespeare's female characters as practicable. It may be noted with regret, that they have been associating with the ordinary, their tongues no longer distributing the grace and wisdom they uttered when at home.*

OPHELIA

*Is found seated, unhappy, with a packet of letters tied with a ribbon. She may be well to the front of the picture to the players' left hand.*

CORDELIA

*May be found to the right hand of the players, but much in the background. She is disconsolate beyond measure and does not appear to be aware that there are other characters present.*

ROSALIND, PORTIA, VIOLA, IMOGEN

*Are generally seen near the centre of the picture, they are at present discussing a weighty matter with avidity, as follows :—*

IMOGEN. For me? I would endure such shame twice told for one I love.

ROSALIND. Ay, it would take more than wearing of doublet and hose to give my cheek the blush.

PORTIA. In tender questions, pride will oftentimes drown kind modesty with satisfaction in one's seeming.

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Looked we in truth's mirror our blush would be no flush but one continued fever, so frequent do we err in our deportment. For myself, if occasion should demand that I inhabit my person as a man, I would assume the guise of one who wears a gown or cowl or ample cloak: thus may our sex while feigning man, retain their modesty.

VIOLA. Dear Portia, were you a man in truth, you'd soon turn judge.

IMOGEN. No cowl nor ample cloak for her but gown I'll warrant. For, secret, hark, it was, but yesterday I spied a weighty tome of Venice law bear down her lap.

ROSALIND. What color gown? That's *first* determined is it not?

PORTIA. So? Indeed! 'Twere worthier fondling books upon my lap than the senseless men I've seen upon the knees of Rosalinda here.

IMOGEN. Men!

VIOLA. Upon her knees!

ROSALIND. It is not true.

PORTIA. Their voices more tuneful, than in some men I have heard, in—that they were silent; their manners more gentler, in—that they were still; their dress of highest design, for they were modes of fashion, with that added virtue, that they could be put easily aside, being but on paper.

IMOGEN. Only pictures, penned and painted?

PORTIA. Ay, but of *men*, mark you, not girls, nor flowers, nor sheep; but men, whose outlines she scanned with eye of starveling.

VIOLA. She determined then from *fashion's* whim, that long hose and jacket were wisest wear for women bent on playing man?

PORTIA. Our Rosie scorned the fashions. She did not so decide.

ROSALIND. Did not? What was my measure then?

PORTIA. You give me leave to speak?

ROSALIND. Judge on, oh lady-judge, we hunger for thy wisdom.

PORTIA. If I am too bold, Viola and Imogen silence



me. But listen thirstily to my reasons. Our Rosalind here hath no present need to mask in man's attire; *why* then should she desire to don it? Because, odds pat-cakes, she hath discovered it doth become her. One morning early risen, she observed herself upon the sunlit wall and her shadow did beguile her. Thence, I see, she is determined that the occasion shall appear. For "why" sighs she, "should a proper ankle waste, for always, its outline in the darkness of a skirt."

VIOLA. Well? well? well? If this indeed be true of Rosalind, is her reasoning then immodest?

IMOGEN. If of the garb one is not conscious, that itself is answer.

PORTIA. Ho, ho! You sing in tune! Are well poised ankles so plenty that they crowd forth to be basked on?

ROSALIND. Not too plenteous, Portia, for we do know a maid, who, if occasion opportuned her to play in man's attire, would choose to hide her in "gown or cowl or ample cloak." No, no, a comedy face is no guarantor for a dainty limb, they stand not on every corner.

PORTIA. Alone, they are a weak possession, a pointed ankle often bears a dull wit.

ROSALIND. They bear enough to trip the wit of many men.

ROSALIND. A truce about men, say I, whose giddy sight is hindrance to their reason.

IMOGEN. So say we all of us.

VIOLA. Here comes one whose youthful skirt our question puts to flight.

*Enter JULIET from their right*

IMOGEN. Why so breathless, Julietta?

JULIET. I am come to tell you, I am no longer a child. I have bade farewell to all my dolls. Soon there'll be for me, one whom I, like you, may name "my own dear lord." No longer will your secrets be too grown for me to share.

PORTIA. Why then confide to us the charm, that

brings to blossom thus suddenly the youngest of our buds.

JULIET. In twenty days, my mother gives a wondrous ball, to which will come all the gallants of our house of Capulet.

ROSALIND. And know you who are named?

JULIET. None but one I know already, the County Paris. I would you all were bidden.

VIOLA. So, alas, do we!

ROSALIND. Our habitations are so distant.

IMOGEN. Did ever father's favorite daughters meet so little as we?

JULIET. Are you his favorite daughter too?

VIOLA. I know I am. Such love as he bears me, if held for all, would lift him off the earth.

PORTIA. He hath bequeathed us each a special virtue, which we must emphasize as the flowers theirs.

JULIET. Why does Ophelia sit alone and heed us not? I'll share my news with her.

VIOLA. Do not; she hath been curtly dealt with by Prince Hamlet or perchance her father. Contrast not thy happiness with her sorrow. Comparisons are steps to pain.

PORTIA. Thoughts unmoved, like dead water, disease their confines. Therefore stir thou her sad thought, lest, becoming clogged, it o'erslough her like to Cordelia here.

IMOGEN. What words of ours can heal her heart?

ROSALIND. I will hazard, one from Hamlet could send more sunshine to her dark life than a thousand moonbeams of our cold comfort.

JULIET. In twenty days, I sure shall see the dear, kind lord, who is to give me comfort all my days.

PORTIA. Ay, those whom we know not to-day may give us joy to-morrow. But, infant-woman, do not forget the touch of thy nurse's apron string before thou canst walk.

ROSALIND. Peace, torrential adviser, here comes the newly wedded Beatrice who will o'erwash thee with advice as utterly as the Amazon a desert spring.

JULIET. Oh, my ears are unstrung with her re-echoed wisdom. Come, I have a store of sugared rose leaves, enough for all. I would rather see them pass in through your lips, than proverbs pass out.

IMOGEN. Is Desdemona shallow or deep that she proves so good a listener?

PORTIA. Neither, but like a plate of gold, shines broad again the brightness she receives.

ROSALIND. Then I will stand where she can shine on me, some of her news concerning man's attire.

PORTIA. Oh! Another day. For this instant, let Juliet's rose leaves silence us awhile.

*They exeunt together towards their right*

*Enter BEATRICE and DESDEMONA another way*

BEATRICE. I tell thee 'Mona, to keep thy lord after thou hast won him, do not show him too oft thy back, lest some other woman standing face to face, he find her smile a better picture than the nape bone of thy neck. No, when thou hast let the man thou hast chosen, catch thee, stand thenceforth, where, if he run, he will fall into thy arms; and not where, he slipping by, thou wilt have to run, ignominiously, after him.

DESDEMONA. But, I am still a maid.

BEATRICE. Then life to thee remains a maze.

*Enter LADY MACBETH, who stands apart*

BEATRICE. Your unmarried woman is without a ship whereon to trim the sails of her ambition.

LADY MACBETH. And if her ship sail a restless tide, like to my Macbeth; what the advantage of wedlock? Notwithstanding, find some ground to plant thy faith where it may thrive. Choose thee a husband who may lift thee, or thou canst lead to thy level; then raise thyself and him again till death find thee higher, more exalted than thy birth. Thus action giving thee life, thou wilt 'scape stagnation, which proves to be the food of death.

DESDEMONA. Tell me, Beatrice, doth the outer man have ought to do with wedded peace; as if, he be fair

or dark? and if being dark, how dark for proprieties' satisfaction?

BEATRICE. Young love is color blind. Within the month I swore my Ben as perfect as Apollo, but now my love, being saner placed, mine eyes can note the tawney of his skin and peering deeper to the better man, my love doth tighten.

DESDEMONA. But were he more than common brown, past Spanish tan?

BEATRICE. Were he burnt as to a Moor and know him as I now do, my love could know no change.

DESDEMONA. Yet if his blood were dark from birth, an Indie or a Moor?

BEATRICE. Not all the sultry blood of Africa could stain the true strong heart of Benedict.

DESDEMONA. Couldst thou then marry a Moor?

BEATRICE. Had he the soul of Benedict and I the eyes of Beatrice, subtlest lies of Satan could not part us. Father,—mother,—duty,—time,—space,—all, methinks, could find no chink for needle point to scratch an entrance 'twixt our loves.

DESDEMONA. As I listen to thy feeling, my heart doth preen for flight. How is't, since wedded, thou dost talk more sober?

BEATRICE. The yoke of marriage, curbing speed, combines the power and so gives ballast to the mind. Does my assurance make you happy?

DESDEMONA. More than I dare think. O I could tell thee battle stories I have lately heard, but so well told, that I fear recounting would spoil their memory. And yet what is to fear, come tell me again.

*Exeunt BEATRICE and DESDEMONA*

LADY MACBETH. "Ballast to thy mind"? Conceited plaything! thy ballast is but pride. These lambkin loves are sweetened honey to my taste.

*She peruses a letter*

OPHELIA

*Clasping her package of letters and weeping*

Alone, alone, alone! My father's present harshness gives more loneliness to my heart than leagues of distance from my gentle brother. And Hamlet, motive of my thoughts and acts, art thou worlds away or nearer than an hour ago? I cannot tell. Love and cruelty so much commingled in his words. I know not where I rest. I do not rest,—I am at sea. O who can give me peace?

LADY MACBETH *moves away*

He says I am not true, yet bade me hide my purity in solitude. His words spake hate, his voice told love. I cannot think. I cannot move. Each drop in me is chaos.

CORDELIA

*For the first time is seen to move. She looks stonily and for a long time at OPHELIA*

If she can pity me 'twill ease her heart.

*Arises and comes quietly to OPHELIA, then covering her face with her hands, she kneels and rests her head in OPHELIA'S lap*

OPHELIA. It is Cordelia. Look up. Why, thou art wretched too and yet thine eye is dry. Come you to me for comfort? If so, I can but hold thee close and if thou seest tears, translate them as for thee, for sympathy in words I know not how to give.

CORDELIA. Place thine ear to mine, so,—and we will listen for each other's thoughts.

OPHELIA. I would not have thee hear my miseries, for then thou too must weep.

CORDELIA. To weep is best of all. Could I do so, ingratitude would melt away, would have no power, I'd feel my father's presence. O teach me how to weep.

OPHELIA. Cordelia, why hast thou long been silent, is't for thy father?

CORDELIA. O precious silence! Ophelia, in a

world where little truth is spoken, silence less evil there obtains. These maidens are all kind, but should I unstop my pain to them, a scatter of advice unsuited, would fall like winter's leaves about mine ears. Each day they chatter up a house of words and when the day is spent, it leaves no trace behind. For pastime, they do weave a happy future round some ne'erborn man of their conceiving. Thy Hamlet is the dearest, sanest man of all, yet him they do consider to be mad.

OPHELIA. I had a mind to ask their thoughts concerned with Hamlet, but now thy words dissuade.

CORDELIA. I'll tell their answer e'er thou ask them. This day their remedy for troubled love lies these ways. Thou shouldst mask thee in the habiliments of a man and so engage as Hamlet's servant; then learning all his moods, thou mayest wisely soothe him. One will 'vise thee how to dress, another how demean thyself, a third shall give thee points at law and preach to thee of modesty. Coaxing, pleading, baiting, all shall be proposed to bring him out and when their talk is run, why, a riddle hath been asked thee.

OPHELIA. Cordelia, Prince Hamlet is so vast a man the world can scarce comprise him, and yet his dear simplicity did link his tastes to mine. Now, now he is estranged, oh am I so to lose him?

CORDELIA. If I had held thy place and live as near to such a thought as Hamlet, and then there came a void between our loves, wouldst know my course?

OPHELIA. O tell it me.

CORDELIA. I'd fill my silence full with love and sitting quiet watch and wait, not tiring with sad looks, but simply and with hope await my place, then as some ground for tiny seed and deed of love appear, it should be sown, until some day he'd turn and find my garden grown, a place wherein to rest.

*They hold each other close. OPHELIA weeps*

CORDELIA. I giv'st thee my best counsel, dear. Hast ought to solve *my* hardened ache?

PORTIA *enters, looks on OPHELIA, then to her enter ROSALIND, IMOGEN, BEATRICE, DESDEMONA,—they stand together*

PORTIA. Poor child, see how she clings unto Cordelia.

ROSALIND. Of sorrow she's too much now, we dare not give her more.

DESDEMONA. How did her father die!

BEATRICE. 'Tis not yet given out.

LADY MACBETH *and REGAN enter*

LADY MACBETH. See, Regan, there she sits and broods upon Cordelia.

REGAN. I'll tell her straight.

LADY MACBETH. 'Twere better not, too much of anguish may undo her.

REGAN. An overflow of bitterness will sure, then, taint Cordelia, and I be some avenged. In any wise she soon must hear, and to later tear raw the half healed wound were worse. I'll tell her now.

*She approaches OPHELIA*

Daughter of Polonius, turn thee from my father's stain and heed my news, thy tears do prove her comfort worthless. I do bring thee further cause for grief, yet am I kind, in that I make thy present tears do double duty. Thy father hath been murdered;—and by the mad lord Hamlet.

PORTIA *and her friends draw a sudden breath and hold to one another*

CORDELIA *draws OPHELIA close to her while looking with pity upon REGAN*

ROSALIND. Said she by Hamlet?

PORTIA. The gentlest of all gentlemen?

BEATRICE. Can nature be upset?

IMOGEN. A rose give poison?

VIOLA. Or the sun freeze?

LADY MACBETH. All humankind seem not what

they are. In truth his deed is deeper still. He sought and thought not her arras-hidden father to destroy, it was, so runs the hint, the husband of his mother.

BEATRICE. The king!

PORTIA. God save him then.

VIOLA. Look to Ophelia, she scarce can stand, yet wills to stand alone.

IMOGEN. Shall we humor her?

DESDEMONA. Peace to her. Our *master*, now, alone can make her new.

ROSALIND. O, Regan, why wast ever born?

LADY MACBETH. They all condemn thee.

REGAN. For doing what thou durst not. Where I am unloved, I leave. I'll have more news and better liking there.

REGAN *exits*

OPHELIA *moves uncertain, distraught*

IMOGEN. Her words have beat her to a living death.

OPHELIA

*Has ceased to weep, has released herself from the embrace of CORDELIA. We see her put her finger to her lips as she walks across to the other side, then passing through the others, who make way for her. She is about to go—they are about to follow—she returns and with gesture indicates that she does not wish them to. She then speaks*

I must gather flowers by the river—they are best.—Do not come. I will bring enough for all.

*She listens*

The little river is very quiet, but I can hear it. It has a message for me. I am going to put my ear so close that I shall lose not a whisper.

*She bows*

Be kind. Always be kind.

*She smiles and leaves them*



ROSALIND. Shall we not follow?

LADY MACBETH. 'Twould but distress her.

VIOLA. Is she feigning that she suffers less than  
me?

PORTIA. She died at Regan's word.

BEATRICE. Let us to the cloister and there think on  
immortality, not death.

DESDEMONA. Dear Cordelia, will you come?

CORDELIA

*With head thrown back and eyes closed, spreads, like  
wings, her arms with palms turned backward,—the  
others perceiving that she wishes them to go, they  
accede to her wish. When alone she covers her face  
with her hands, there is a tumult within her and at  
last, she weeps*

Unwelcome, welcome tears. I weep for her, that could  
not for myself. Thus not feeding on another's woes,  
by pity we do lose our own.

*She follows the way OPHELIA went*

THE ACTRESS

*Who has performed CORDELIA now returns, bows a little,  
then speaks, as follows:—*

My eyes are washed and now I do perceive that all  
the world's a stage, from whence, at end of day, we  
look inquiringly at those who looked on us.

If we have read our author's plot aright, our reward  
should be, to spy, with ours, some brighter, fonder  
eyes, who flash us thanks, and who in turn do work  
and watch and play; while we in turn do dream new  
action for the morrow.

*MUSIC is heard*

O all's not done. We've another here to thank and love  
and I must have my share.

THE ACTRESS *hurries away*

Then after brief interlude, is seen,—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

It may be that he appears personified, or in the form of a statue, bust or painting. Then come to him (or he along with them) all the characters in this fantasy; or even as many of the female characters in all his plays as may be.

Now is to be performed a pantomime, to music, which indicates "love and thanks" to Shakespeare.

So let the artist who directs this scheme, use all the arts he may command and with a generous and active eye, paint his action tunefully.

#### THE END

When the time is scant, in which to arrange a pantomime especially suited to the material at hand, let the following be performed to Mendelssohn's music from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," the fairy theme especially. This music should commence pianissimo when the actress who plays Cordelia, says: "action for the morrow," and becomes mezzo-forte as she hurries away.

After a slight pause, TITANIA trips on with her fairy wand, and listens right and left, then apparently hears something and tripping up to some bushes in the background in the centre, she peers through and dances with delight at her discovery, she comes forward and beckons right and left;—then dance on the four little fairies PEAS-BLOSSOM—COBWEB—MOTH—and MUSTARD SEED, two from each side, they turn about in little circles until they come together in the centre, forming a little picture with their backs to the audience, stooping with their hands on their knees and their heads together. Now TITANIA, who has been up in the centre, trips down and points up to the bushes and putting her head close to theirs whispers to them, at which they all dance up and down on their toes and clap their hands with glee. TITANIA beckons that she wishes to whisper to them again, thereupon they form the little picture again, this time with faces towards the audience and TITANIA with her back to it. She

whispers to them, at which they all trip off right and left to the music, TITANIA meanwhile waving her wand over them and when they are gone she goes to the bushes at the back and waves a salutation over it. Now the little fairies, two from each side, come dancing on backwards, beckoning on from near and far AS MANY OF THE FEMALE CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AS MAY BE OBTAINED.

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They come on singly, excitedly, shrugging their shoulders in interrogation, asking in pantomime, what it is all about. TITANIA trips among them forming them into a half circle, the open side to the audience, she bades, with her wand, look up at the bushes,—they turn half away from the audience and await in saucy attitude, with their hands on their hips, the surprise they have in store for them. TITANIA directs the little fairies, who trip up to the bushes, carefully draws them away and discovers SHAKESPEARE asleep on a green bank, an old-fashioned book lying loosely in his hand.

At sight of him all the characters express joy, kneel with their hands outstretched in reverence, then they rush to him on their toes, extending their hands to him. TITANIA placing her wand horizontally, keeps them away, the little fairies also stand on guard. They try to peep at him but back away, while he still sleeps. TITANIA comes forward to the centre with the four little fairies, she encircles them with her wand, at this they all proceed to trip an elaborate “grand right and left,” taking bouquets from their belts they strike them as they pass one another,—they do not take one another's hand but simply tip the fingers as they dance past, with their hands held high. They all keep glancing at SHAKESPEARE, who finally awakens, at which they, each in turn, dance up and lay the bouquets at his feet, tripping up from one side and returning the opposite side and forming the original half circle right and left. SHAKESPEARE rises much pleased and kisses his hands to them, when they have all arrived in the half circle he raises his hands as if in benediction, at

which they all kneel on one knee, their hands stretched toward him in appeal.

The MUSIC at this point descends to a *pianissimo*,— then SHAKESPEARE speaks as follows :

Children of my dreams, how I love thee !—

Yet more than dream-children ; for, down the ages shall ye live as jewels to adorn those artist souls, painters, players, writers, who love thee.

Then as *they* pass to other spheres and other poets, some perchance, to meet with me again, thou shalt remain to entrance and cheer and give ambition to the ages soon to come.—

Play on sweet children, thy joy is mine, mine is thine.

Would my arms were great enough to crush thee all, like to a bouquet of sweetest flowers.

My heart is thine, thine is mine,

Play on. Play on.

They now all sing “Good-night” (words from *Romeo and Juliet*, music by Howard Glover). And as SHAKESPEARE retreats amongst the foliage (or disappears by special light effects), descends the

CURTAIN







